America Needs Skilled Tradesmen

"National Tradesmen Day" Aims to Thank Professional Tradesmen, Boost Appreciation for Jobs Related to America's Skilled Trades

HUNTERSVILLE, N.C., Sept 17, 2012 – America has a shortage of professional tradesmen. According to ManpowerGroup's 2012 report, our nation's number one category of the hardest jobs to fill is that of skilled tradesmen. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that more than one third of skilled tradesmen are over the age of 50. In fact, for every three tradesmen who retire, there's only one skilled person trained to perform the work. These trends could mean trouble for a rebounding America. At the heart of this shortfall of plumbers, welders, roofers, masons, auto mechanics and other skilled workers is a culture that fails to honor the hard work that these men and women do every day, despite job openings and opportunities to earn good wages as tradesmen.

If people across America don't start appreciating tradesmen and encouraging young adults to enter the trades, who will build our homes, fix our roofs, repair our plumbing and keep our cars maintained? National Tradesmen Day — initiated by IRWIN Tools in 2011 and held the third Friday in September of each year — is a day to say "thanks" to these hard-working men and women who typically receive too little recognition for their skills and dedication.

According to Curt Weber, Vice President of Marketing for IRWIN Tools, "Unlike previous generations, today's youth really aren't considering a career as a tradesman. With a growing shortage of skilled workers, and a real need for folks who can work with their hands, it's a perfect time to bring attention to the opportunities that a career as an electrician, plumber or welder provides. Tradesmen are the backbone of our great nation. Their life's work literally makes our lives work."

IRWIN's "Appreciation Events" Salute Tradesmen Across the Nation

During the second-annual National Tradesmen Day celebration on Friday, September 21, IRWIN aims to raise the public profile of professional tradesmen with "Appreciation Events" and awareness campaigns that honor tradesmen and support the important work skilled tradesmen do for our country. At New York City's One World Trade Center and Parkland Hospital in Dallas, thousands of professional tradesmen will be greeted and thanked by public officials and IRWIN employees at the start of their shift on National Tradesmen Day. At The Green Parrot, an iconic bar in Key West, Florida, professional tradesmen will be the honored guests at a slightly more raucous "Appreciation Party," complete with food, drink and gifts for all tradesmen.

"Tradesmen often work in unbelievable conditions such as mud, snow, intense heat and pouring rain," adds Weber. "It's not often that we stop to say 'thanks.' Irwin created National Tradesmen Day as a day to celebrate all that our nation's tradesmen do to contribute so meaningfully to our lives in so many ways. It's our hope that the entire nation will join us as we show appreciation for our nation's skilled tradesmen on September 21."

For information on National Tradesmen Day or ideas about how you can recognize tradesmen in your community, visit www.nationaltradesmenday.com or facebook.com/nationaltradesmenday.

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About IRWIN Tools
IRWIN® Tools manufactures and distributes a broad line of hand tools and power tool accessories including VISE-GRIP® pliers and wrenches, MARATHON® saw blades, QUICK-GRIP® clamping tools, SPEEDBOR® wood drilling bits, STRAIT-LINE® marking tools, UNIBIT® step drill bits, MARPLES® fine woodworking tools, and HANSON® taps and dies. IRWIN Tools is a part of Newell Rubbermaid's global portfolio of leading brands. For more information, call 1-800-GO-IRWIN or visit www.irwin.com. IRWIN invites the nation to celebrate **National Tradesmen Day**, on **Friday, Sept. 21**.